

JANUARY 2024



## St. John Journey

<https://www.stjohnabingdon.org/>

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### Council President's Corner

Years ago, maybe January 1994 or 1995, on the twelfth day of Christmas, I remember taking my two boys and our Christmas tree to the open space south of the current St John parking lot. On that night, my boys and I, along with other church members including Pastor Frank Honeycutt, celebrated the burning of the greens. There were maybe six or seven trees, and at least two (well maybe three) firebugs and ultimately a big fire. Yep, we burnt those trees and produced a bonfire extraordinaire! Despite growing up Lutheran, that was the first time I'd participated in the burning of the greens, a tradition that ushers in the season of Epiphany. That Red Barn fir tree used to decorate our house that Christmas had served its purpose and certainly burning it was one way to get rid of it. I remember that it was cold that night, and the warmth of the fire felt good. The light from the fire comforted me. Funny how I can remember things like that. Research tells us that **one reason we experience internal relaxation when watching a fire is because our thoughts are drawn into the flames, and the longer this happens, the more we let go of the hustle and bustle of every-day life.** So, on that cold January night, one of the shortest days of the year, that bonfire sort of helped those present celebrate the warmth, light, and marvel of Christ Jesus coming into the world.

January 6 and the start of Epiphany is just around the corner. Epiphany is one of the oldest seasons of the Christian church calendar and like all of our church seasons, it celebrates Jesus in a unique way. We wait for Him to come during Advent. We celebrate His birth during Christmas, and we anticipate his death during Lent. Last year I wrote that Epiphany is kind of an obscure little season tucked comfortably between the excitement of Christmas and the seriousness of Lent. Traditionally, we often depict Epiphany as the season of light—beginning with the story of the Magi following a star and ending with Jesus, Peter,

**James and John (along with Moses and Elijah) in a flash of bright light up on a big mountain.**

**It is during Epiphany when the light of Christ can be most noticeable. We clearly see that God has revealed himself to us through the God-man Christ Jesus. It is also a time when we commemorate and recognize that Jesus is both true God and true man. During Epiphany, we worship the one who has given all mankind access to God through himself. And it is on that mountain that Jesus proclaims to His disciples, then and now, that He is the one who has come to die for the sins of the world.**

The light often associated with Epiphany can also be us, the St. John community. As we seek a new pastor, we need that light to shine, just as it did for the Magi. Moreover, like the Magi, we need to heed that inner faith that says this is where the journey takes us.

Finally, we don't have much time to enjoy Epiphany this year as Ash Wednesday is on February 14. Consequently, during this Epiphany season, may we all continue to ponder the astounding revelation that solves every problem this world throws at us – that because Jesus Christ was born, lived, died, and rose again – the mysteries of God have been revealed to us, and we will live forever with Him.

## **God's Peace and Blessings,**

### **Bill**

*Note: Some of this content is paraphrased from a Pastoral Desk Diary, 2023, Pages 40-41, and from Walking in Grace 2024, page 7.*



## **Prayer Chain**

Steve Kluttz  
Richard Brumleve  
Joel Rosen  
Dallas Church  
Bridgette Smith  
Peg Curphey

Nancy King  
Taulbee Cherry

We pray for all on the front lines: doctors, nurses, medical personnel.

We pray for the homebound: Vickianne Dotten, Barbara Wright, Betsy Bonham.

If you have names to add (or ones to be taken off) the prayer chain, please email the church office.

**Quilters** Holiday luncheon is scheduled for January 9 at the Peppermill. We will meet as usual to assemble a few quilts and then adjourn to the restaurant for a Dutch Treat meal and fellowship and complete our volunteer gift exchange.

Reminder, we meet from 9:30 to noon on Tuesdays in the church fellowship hall. If you can tie a knot, you will get better at that by joining us . If Washington County schools are closed due to weather issues, we do NOT meet. School holidays don't count. Our Christmas break is December 26 and January 2.

**St. John's NexTrex Plastic Recycling Update: total pounds so far—72**  
**Keep up the great work--bring your plastic and fill our bins!**

**FOOD PANTRY-January 22nd-26th, 2024**  
**St. John serves at the Food Pantry.**  
**Volunteers needed on Monday 9AM-1PM, Tuesday 4-6PM, and Friday 9AM-1PM.**

**Book Group** will meet in St. John FH on Sunday, January 14<sup>th</sup> at 2PM. We are reading The Extraordinary Life of Sam Hell, by Robert Dugoni. Carolyn Church will lead the discussion.

**Tapestry Group** We will meet Tuesday, January 16th at 7PM on Zoom.



### **January Birthdays**

January 9: Katie Gifford  
January 10: Katie Kluttz  
January 11: Chris Dixon  
January 29: Lisa Roberts

**If we missed your January birthday, please let the church office know.**

### **Volunteers for January**

Sunday January 7  
Lay Asst.: Linda Garnett, Lector :Charlie Garnett  
Ushers: Meachams  
Altar Guild:  
Counters: The Krolls

Sunday January 14  
Lay Asst :Ken Croghan, Lector: Doris Vaught  
Ushers: Sue Croghan, Don Williams  
Altar Guild:  
Counters: Doris Vaught, Chris Meacham

Sunday January 21  
Lay Asst.: Ed Davis, Lector: Sandy Davis  
Ushers: Spencers  
Altar Guild:  
Counters: Helen French, Sandy Davis

Sunday January 28  
Lay Asst.: Linda Garnett, Lector: Dave Morris  
Ushers: Giffords  
Altar Guild:  
Counters: Jim Suhrbier, Doris Vaught

Sign-up sheets for Usher and Altar Guild are on the bulletin board. There is also a sign-up sheet for refreshments.

Please find someone to trade with if you cannot serve your assigned Sunday.